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Letters to the Editor

Katina Strauch
Against the Grain

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Letters



Hey! The letters have slowed down over the summer. What's up? Are y'all on vacation or something?

Dear Editor:

Just received my copy of *ATG* (April 1993). Badly wrinkled bottom right hand corner. Tattered and torn generally.

It is legible — so text is o.k. for that purpose.

Thanks for a great publication and wonderful conference. Your efforts are truly appreciated.

Kathern J. Miraglia
(Catholic University)

Ed note: Most is quiet on the paper front. Is the new paper working out for most of you or not? Kathy, how was the June issue?

Dear Editor:

I have to tell you I really enjoy *ATG*. It is the ONLY title our department subscribes to. We get a tremendous amount out of it, and so painlessly!

I'm particularly enjoying the June is-

sue — found the interviews with Rowe and with the publisher of *Lingua Franca* very informative, interesting, relevant, and readable. It seems a particularly "rich" issue. The column by Glen Secor on copyright was useful; I hadn't heard before about the Norwegian model, and will look forward to Glen's followup about that. And I'm still not done reading!

Ellen Duranceau
(MIT Libraries)

Dear Editor:

What a refreshing publication! I discovered *Against the Grain* at ALA this summer and read it cover to cover. I was impressed by your incredible range of features and felt personally as well as professionally enriched. One idea, however . . . how about a regular section on library automation? A lot is happening which may interest readers, especially from your editorial perspective.

I also appreciated the People inter-

view highlighting Richard Rowe and Faxon. Thanks again.

Sincerely,
Patricia Craumer
(Dynix, Inc.)

*Ed note: Guess what? Great minds think alike. We have decided to do a Library Automation Section of *ATG* in the future and the column editor will be Mary McLaren from the University of Kentucky. If anyone is interested in sending information, press releases, etc., to Mary please do so at McLaren@ukcc.uky.edu over the Internet or phone (606)257-2543 or fax (606)257-1563.*



Plus Ça Change

Column Editor, **Karen Schmidt** (U. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

Bibliographical Birth Control

As you read this, Karen is off to Australia for three weeks. Some people have all the kangaroos . . .

Those readers who choose not to believe in reincarnation will take note of the following apparent evidence of the previous incarnation of **Charles Hamaker**. In his previous life time, Hamaker obviously was one **Clarence Sherman**, who served at the public library in Providence, Rhode Island. Mr. Sherman, speaking at an ALA Order and Book Selection Round Table in 1937, with a speech entitled "Fewer and Better Books: A Consideration of Bibliographi-

cal Birth Control," offered the following Hamakerian observation:

"If 75 per cent of the books of fiction published in the United States last year (especially mysteries, westerns, and drippy love stories), if 50 per cent of the books on advertising and business letter writing, 40 per cent of the poetry, 30 per cent of the school and college textbooks, 15 per cent of the biography and travel, 10 per cent of the books on world peace, and appropriate percentages of some other classes had never come off the printing presses, they would not have been missed. If the public libraries of this country on anything like a normal budget had neglected or refused to add to their shelves the books of 1936 in even so generous proportions, the towns and cities in which they are situated would be quite as interesting and quite as worthwhile places in which to live."

Unlike Chuck Hamaker, who points out the vagaries of a temperamental marketplace, Mr. Sherman was insulted by the intellectual content of the items purchased by libraries. He proposed that libraries must be intellectual powerhouses, "...where generating the intellectual abilities of the citizenry is to be the primary function." He called for a shift in emphasis from "the temporary and the time-killing . . . to something that man might live by."

Both Sherman and Hamaker might find common ground, however, in paying too much for items which are of dubious character, and of buying into the notion that "more is better." It seems clear that Hamaker's karma has moved him from monographs to serials, and from a public to a university setting. Will someone call The Amazing Randy? ☛